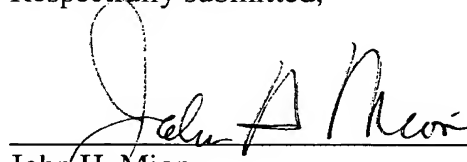


PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT
U.S. APPLN. NO. 10/623,865

REMARKS

The above amendments have been made to eliminate all multiple dependent claims (both proper and improper), thereby both ensuring examination of all claims on the merits in the first Office Action and eliminating the need for a multiple dependent claim fee.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John H. Mion", is written over a horizontal line.

John H. Mion
Registration No. 18,879

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Date: January 14, 2004